

Illinois American Water Invests Over \$3.7 Million in Alton District Wastewater System

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ALTON – In June 2019, Illinois American Water acquired the Alton Regional Wastewater System which serves customers in Alton and nearby communities of Bethalto and Godfrey. Immediately after the close, the company began making investments to the sanitary sewer system.

According to Karen Cooper, Director of Operations, over \$3.7 million was invested in the first 12 months of ownership, “to support reliability and public health.” She said, “We made a commitment to our customers to upgrade the system and address requirements set forth by the City’s long-term control plan. We’re proud of the progress we’ve made in a short period of time.”

A significant portion of the first-year investment included completion of the design phase for separating the combined sewer system in the Turner Tract, Piasa Valley and Shields Valley service areas. This project in part helps to address Long Term Control Plan requirements outlined in Alton's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit. Additional projects completed in the collection and treatment systems are listed below: Approximately 3,500 feet of sewer main and 16 manholes were installed along Washington Avenue, Kendall Avenue and Krug Place. The wastewater treatment plant chlorine injection equipment was replaced. This equipment helps to disinfect the water that leaves the plant before entering the Mississippi River. Five Aeration blowers and motors were rebuilt including the installation of new Variable Frequency Drives (VFD). VFDs minimize pumping output to match process demands, rather than pumping at one constant speed, reducing energy use while decreasing Illinois American Water's environmental footprint. The grit removal system was upgraded with two new classifiers for the separation of organics.

Two sludge pumps and two scum pumps as well as a screen compactor were replaced at the wastewater treatment plant. In addition, the team also rebuilt three effluent pumps and motors that transport treated wastewater away from the plant during high river stages. Security upgrades were also made to allow remote operation and monitoring of the plant. According to Cooper, these investments support uninterrupted service even during an emergency.

Cooper said, "Wastewater service is often taken for granted, but is so important to the health of a community, especially during an emergency. This is why many of our upgrades not only focus on optimal operation, but continued operations during flooding, natural disasters, and more. We want to be sure our customers can continue to dispose of waste and to do so safely. The service we provide is critical.

"Illinois American Water will send a letter to customers to inform them of the investments to the local wastewater system.